

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCE

Department Website: <https://voices.uchicago.edu/giscience> (<https://voices.uchicago.edu/giscience/>)
PROGRAM OF STUDY

Spatial thinking deals with the fundamental role of space, place, location, distance, and interaction—crucial to tackling many research questions in the social and physical sciences. The minor in geographic information science provides a coherent exposure to rigorous spatial thinking and its expression through the theories and methods of geographic information science.

Geographic information science covers all aspects pertaining to accessing, storing, transforming, manipulating, visualizing, exploring, and reasoning about information where the locational component is important (spatial data). This includes the technical and computational aspects of geographic information systems, the methodologies of spatial analysis and spatial statistics, mapping, and geo-visualization, as well as societal aspects related to the use of geographic data.

The minor serves as a complement to other majors, such as computer science, statistics, economics, public policy studies, sociology, anthropology, political science, or environmental and urban studies, but would also be of value to majors in the humanities and physical sciences interested in the spatial aspects of their field.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR

The minor consists of six courses: two prerequisites, three core methods courses, and one elective from a series of offerings. The core methods courses provide a coherent exposure to rigorous spatial thinking and its incorporation into the methodologies of geographic information systems, spatial analysis, and spatial data science.

The electives consist of courses that touch upon various aspects of spatial thinking, with different degrees of technical materials, and are intended to either act as “gateways” into the minor or to provide the opportunity for the application of spatial analysis in a range of fields.

GISC 28400 GIScience Practicum serves as an optional capstone course for the minor. In the course, students will develop a multifaceted GIS project incorporating spatial thinking in design, infrastructure, and implementation. Projects could include the development of a web application, dynamic dashboard, interactive storytelling map, infographic-driven policy brief, or research article and can be carried out in conjunction with a thesis requirement of the student’s major.

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS: MINOR IN GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCE

STAT 22000	Statistical Methods and Applications (or equivalent) *	100
or DATA 11800	Introduction to Data Science I	
GISC 28702	Introduction to GIS and Spatial Analysis (or equivalent introductory GIS course (by petition))	100
Three core methods courses from the approved list		300
Any elective from the list of courses below		100
Total Units		600

* Students who take STAT 22000 or DATA 11800 to satisfy a major requirement will complete a five-course (500-unit) minor.

CORE METHODS OPTIONS FOR THE MINOR IN GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCE

Three of the following courses must be taken to fulfill the core methods requirement for the minor in geographic information science.

GISC 20500	Introduction to Spatial Data Science	100
GISC 27100	Cartographic Design and Geovisualization	100
GISC 28100	Introduction to Geocomputation	100
GISC 28200	Spatial Analysis Methods in Geographic Information Systems	100
GISC 28300	Topics in Geographic Information Science	100
GISC 28400	GIScience Practicum	100

ELECTIVE OPTIONS FOR THE MINOR IN GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCE

A fourth core methods course or one of the following courses may be taken to fulfill the elective course option for the minor in geographic information science. Course availability varies by year.

GISC 20273	Urban Spatial Archaeology I	100
GISC 20519	Spatial Cluster Analysis	100
GISC 25900	Introduction to Location Analysis	100

GISC 27102	Spatial Cognition	100
GISC 28700	Readings in Spatial Analysis	100
GISC 28800	History of Cartography	100
GISC 29000	Reading/Research: Geographic Information Sciences	100

ADVISING AND GRADING

Courses in the minor may not be double-counted with the student's major(s), other minors, or general education requirements.

Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

Students who elect the minor must confer with the program before the end of Spring Quarter of their third year to declare their intention to complete the minor. The director's approval for the minor program should be submitted to the student's College adviser by the deadline above using the Consent to Complete a Minor Program (https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/Consent_Minor_Program.pdf) form.

Students may petition the program to have a course counted as an elective that is not included on the current list of electives.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM COURSES

GISC 20061. Ancient Landscapes I. 100 Units.

This is a two-course sequence that introduces students to theory and method in landscape studies and the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to analyze archaeological, anthropological, historical, and environmental data. Course one covers the theoretical and methodological background necessary to understand spatial approaches to landscape and the fundamentals of using ESRI's ArcGIS software, and further guides students in developing a research proposal. Course two covers more advanced GIS-based analysis (using vector, raster, and satellite remote sensing data) and guides students in carrying out their own spatial research project. In both courses, techniques are introduced through the discussion of case studies (focused on the archaeology of the Middle East) and through demonstration of software skills. During supervised laboratory times, the various techniques and analyses covered will be applied to sample archaeological data and also to data from a region/ topic chosen by the student.

Instructor(s): Mehrnoush Soroush Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): GISC 30061, NEAA 30061, ANTH 26710, CEGU 30061, ANTH 36710, NEAA 20061, CEGU 20061

GISC 20062. Ancient Landscapes II. 100 Units.

This is a two-course sequence that introduces students to theory and method in landscape studies and the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to analyze archaeological, anthropological, historical, and environmental data. Course one covers the theoretical and methodological background necessary to understand spatial approaches to landscape and the fundamentals of using ESRI's ArcGIS software, and further guides students in developing a research proposal. Course two covers more advanced GIS-based analysis (using vector, raster, and satellite remote sensing data) and guides students in carrying out their own spatial research project. In both courses, techniques are introduced through the discussion of case studies (focused on the archaeology of the Middle East) and through demonstration of software skills. During supervised laboratory times, the various techniques and analyses covered will be applied to sample archaeological data and also to data from a region/ topic chosen by the student.

Instructor(s): Mehrnoush Soroush Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): NEAA 20061

Equivalent Course(s): GISC 30062, CEGU 20062, NEAA 30062, ANTH 36711, NEAA 20062, ANTH 26711, CEGU 30062

GISC 20500. Introduction to Spatial Data Science. 100 Units.

Spatial data science consists of a collection of concepts and methods drawn from both statistics and computer science that deal with accessing, manipulating, visualizing, exploring and reasoning about geographical data. The course introduces the types of spatial data relevant in social science inquiry and reviews a range of methods to explore these data. Topics covered include formal spatial data structures, geovisualization and visual analytics, rate smoothing, spatial autocorrelation, cluster detection and spatial data mining. An important aspect of the course is to learn and apply open source GeoDa software.

Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn

Prerequisite(s): STAT 22000 (or equivalent), familiarity with GIS is helpful, but not necessary

Equivalent Course(s): CEGU 20253, GISC 30500, SOCI 20253, ENST 20253, MACS 54000, SOCI 30253

GISC 20519. Spatial Cluster Analysis. 100 Units.

This course provides an overview of methods to identify interesting patterns in geographic data, so-called spatial clusters. Cluster concepts come in many different forms and can generally be differentiated between the search for interesting locations and the grouping of similar locations. The first category consists of the identification of extreme concentrations of locations (events), such as hot spots of crime events, and the location of geographical

concentrations of observations with similar values for one or more variables, such as areas with elevated disease incidence. The second group consists of the combination of spatial observations into larger (aggregate) areas such that internal similarity is maximized (regionalization). The methods covered come from the fields of spatial statistics as well as machine learning (unsupervised learning) and operations research. Topics include point pattern analysis, spatial scan statistics, local spatial autocorrelation, dimension reduction, as well as spatially explicit hierarchical, agglomerative and density-based clustering. Applications range from criminology and public health to politics and marketing. An important aspect of the course is the analysis of actual data sets by means of open source software, such as GeoDa, R or Python.

Instructor(s): L. Anselin and P. Amaral Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): STAT 22000 or equivalent; SOCI 20253/30253 (or equivalent) Introduction to Spatial Data Science required.

Equivalent Course(s): MACS 30519, SOCI 20519, SOCI 30519, MACS 20519, DATA 20519, ENST 20519, GISC 30519

GISC 20559. Spatial Regression Analysis. 100 Units.

This course covers statistical and econometric methods specifically geared to the problems of spatial dependence and spatial heterogeneity in cross-sectional data. The main objective for the course is to gain insight into the scope of spatial regression methods, to be able to apply them in an empirical setting, and to properly interpret the results of spatial regression analysis. While the focus is on spatial aspects, the types of methods covered have general validity in statistical practice. The course covers the specification of spatial regression models in order to incorporate spatial dependence and spatial heterogeneity, as well as different estimation methods and specification tests to detect the presence of spatial autocorrelation and spatial heterogeneity. Special attention is paid to the application to spatial models of generic statistical paradigms, such as Maximum Likelihood and Generalized Methods of Moments. An important aspect of the course is the application of open source software tools such as various R packages, GeoDa and the Python Package PySAL to solve empirical problems.

Instructor(s): L. Anselin Terms Offered: Autumn

Prerequisite(s): An intermediate course in multivariate regression or econometrics. Familiarity with matrix algebra

Equivalent Course(s): DATA 20559, SOCI 20559, SOCI 30559, GISC 30559

GISC 24600. Introduction to Urban Sciences. 100 Units.

This course is a grand tour of conceptual frameworks, general phenomena, emerging data and policy applications that define a growing scientific integrated understanding of cities and urbanization. It starts with a general outlook of current worldwide explosive urbanization and associated changes in social, economic and environmental indicators. It then introduces a number of historical models, from sociology, economics and geography that have been proposed to understand how cities operate. We will discuss how these and other facets of cities can be integrated as dynamical complex systems and derive their general characteristics as social networks embedded in structured physical spaces. Resulting general properties of cities will be illustrated in different geographic and historical contexts, including an understanding of urban resource flows, emergent institutions and the division of labor and knowledge as drivers of innovation and economic growth. The second part of the course will deal with issues of inequality, heterogeneity and (sustainable) growth in cities. We will explore how these features of cities present different realities and opportunities to different individuals and how these appear as spatially concentrated (dis)advantage that shape people's life courses. We will show how issues of inequality also have consequences at more macroscopic levels and derive the general features of population and economic growth for systems of cities and nations.

Instructor(s): Luis Bettencourt Terms Offered: TBD. Not offered in 2023-2024 academic year.

Prerequisite(s): STAT 22000

Equivalent Course(s): GISC 34600, CEGU 24600, SOCI 20285, PBPL 24605, ENST 24600

GISC 27100. Cartographic Design and Geovisualization. 100 Units.

This course is a hands-on introduction to core principles and techniques associated with cartographic design, especially with regards to digital map design and the geographic visualization of data. Main topics include map generalization, symbology, scale, visual variables, scales of measurement, 2D and 3D design, map animation and interaction, and web mapping. Students will work with open-source GIS software and web tools, culminating in a final project and peer critique.

Instructor(s): Crystal Bae Terms Offered: Autumn. Offered 2023-24

Equivalent Course(s): CHST 27100, GISC 37100, ENST 27111, CEGU 27100

GISC 27102. Spatial Cognition. 100 Units.

This course serves as an overview of spatial cognition and environmental perception, which relates to all aspects of spatial thinking, spatial behavior, and human-environment interaction in spatial and social contexts. Topics of study include cognitive maps and wayfinding behavior, spatial and environmental learning, spatial choice and decision-making, migration and travel, time geography, place and regional identity, and the role of gender and culture in spatial cognition.

Instructor(s): Crystal Bae Terms Offered: Spring. Offered 2023-24

Equivalent Course(s): ENST 28722, CHST 27102, GISC 37102

GISC 27104. Movement Data and Analysis. 100 Units.

This is a methodological course overviewing movement data types, common data sources and applications, movement representations and scale, movement parameters, 2D and 3D representations of movement, and types of visualization approaches (trajectories, flow maps, network-based). The topics covered draw from application areas in human transportation, temporary travel and migration, and non-human animal movement.

Instructor(s): Crystal Bae Terms Offered: Autumn. Offered 2023-24

Equivalent Course(s): GISC 37104

GISC 27105. Web Mapping. 100 Units.

This course will provide an introduction to Internet-based Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and web cartography. Students will develop proficiency with programming concepts underlying the creation and implementation of quality web mapping applications through hands-on experience creating applications with popular web mapping platforms such as Leaflet and ArcGIS Maps SDK for JavaScript.

Instructor(s): Robert Shepard Terms Offered: Spring 2023-24

Prerequisite(s): GISC 28702 Introduction to GIS & Spatial Analysis, GISC 20500 Introduction to Spatial Data Science, or equivalent training in GIS is strongly recommended

Equivalent Course(s): GISC 37105

GISC 27110. Spatial Thinking in Historical Cartography. 100 Units.

The course will introduce students to the ways in which cartographers in the English-speaking world have conceived of representing spatial patterns in map form, and how that has changed over time beginning in the 18th century, given changes in world view, cultural background, cartographic technology, business organization, and educational fashion. The objective is to sharpen students' ability to think critically about how maps have been produced in history, evaluate their design, effectiveness, and limitations, and the uses to which they have been put.

Instructor(s): M. Conzen Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): This course can be counted toward as a 4th year CEGU/ENST Capstone course.

Equivalent Course(s): ENST 27110, CHST 27110, CEGU 27110

GISC 27155. Urban Design with Nature. 100 Units.

This course will use the Chicago region as the setting to evaluate the social, environmental, and economic effects of alternative forms of human settlement. Students will examine the history, theory and practice of designing cities in sustainable ways - i.e., human settlements that are socially just, economically viable, and environmentally sound. Students will explore the literature on sustainable urban design from a variety of perspectives, and then focus on how sustainability theories play out in the Chicago region. How can Chicago's neighborhoods be designed to promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability goals? This course is part of the College Course Cluster program: Urban Design.

Instructor(s): Sabina Shaikh and Emily Talen Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): This course counts towards the ENST 4th year Capstone requirement. Restricted to 3rd and 4th year students

Equivalent Course(s): ENST 27155, CHST 27155, PBPL 27156, CEGU 27155, BPRO 27155

GISC 28100. Introduction to Geocomputation. 100 Units.

This course investigates the theory and practice of computational approaches in Geographic Information Science. Geocomputation is introduced as a multidisciplinary systems paradigm necessary for solving complex spatial problems and facilitating new understandings. Students will learn about the elements of geographic data models, geospatial topologies, spatial operations, visualizations, and their implementation in Python using libraries such as GeoPandas and Shapely.

Instructor(s): Yue Lin Terms Offered: Winter. Offered 2023-24

Equivalent Course(s): GISC 38100, ARCH 28202

GISC 28200. Spatial Analysis Methods in Geographic Information Systems. 100 Units.

This course provides an overview of methods of spatial analysis and their implementation in geographic information systems. These methods deal with the retrieval, storage, manipulation and transformation of spatial data to create new knowledge. Examples are spatial join operations, spatial overlay, buffering, measuring accessibility, network analysis and raster operations. The fundamental principles behind the methods are covered as well as their application to real-life problems using open source software such as QGIS.

Instructor(s): Crystal Bae Terms Offered: Winter. Offered 2023-24

Equivalent Course(s): ARCH 28402, GISC 38200

GISC 28300. Topics in Geographic Information Science. 100 Units.

This advanced course extends and connects both foundational and functional concepts in Geographic Information Science. Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of key areas, including web GIS as well as advanced geospatial visualization techniques. In addition, the course emphasizes the utilization of the R programming language. Students will delve into static, animated, and interactive mapping in R and develop skills in building interactive web mapping applications using Shiny

Instructor(s): Yue Lin Terms Offered: Autumn. Offered 2023-24

Equivalent Course(s): ARCH 28602, GISC 38300

GISC 28400. GIScience Practicum. 100 Units.

This applied course in geographic information science builds upon and refines knowledge and geocomputational expertise gained in the GIScience sequence. Students will develop a multifaceted GIS project incorporating spatial thinking in design, infrastructure, and implementation. The 2024 Practicum will emphasize Urban renewal in the mid-20th century, specifically, Chicago during the 1960s. Students will conduct guided projects investigating the implications and legacies of urban renewal, utilizing spatial analysis methods such as network analysis, accessibility analysis, machine learning, and/or regression modeling. This course will feature guest lectures from organizations such as the Chicago History Museum and Preservation Chicago to introduce stories and backgrounds of urban renewal in the United States. Students will also have the opportunity to present their work at an event in collaboration with the Chicago History Museum.

Instructor(s): Yue Lin Terms Offered: Spring. Offered 2023-24

Prerequisite(s): Students must complete GISC 28100/38100, GISC 28200/38200 (or equivalent GISC coursework) and SOCI 20253/30253 Introduction to Spatial Data Science before taking this course.

Equivalent Course(s): GISC 38400, CHST 28400

GISC 28700. Readings in Spatial Analysis. 100 Units.

This independent reading option is an opportunity to explore special topics in the exploration, visualization and statistical modeling of geospatial data.

Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter 2023-24

Note(s): This course is consent-only. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Available for either quality grades or for P/F grading.

Equivalent Course(s): ENST 28800, GISC 38700

GISC 28702. Introduction to GIS and Spatial Analysis. 100 Units.

This course provides an introduction and overview of how spatial thinking is translated into specific methods to handle geographic information and the statistical analysis of such information. This is not a course to learn a specific GIS software program, but the goal is to learn how to think about spatial aspects of research questions, as they pertain to how the data are collected, organized and transformed, and how these spatial aspects affect statistical methods. The focus is on research questions relevant in the social sciences, which inspires the selection of the particular methods that are covered. Examples include spatial data integration (spatial join), transformations between different spatial scales (overlay), the computation of "spatial" variables (distance, buffer, shortest path), geovisualization, visual analytics, and the assessment of spatial autocorrelation (the lack of independence among spatial variables). The methods will be illustrated by means of open source software such as QGIS and R.

Instructor(s): Crystal Bae Terms Offered: Spring Summer. Offered 2023-24

Equivalent Course(s): GISC 38702, PPHA 38712, ARCH 28702, CEGU 28702, SOCI 30283, SOCI 20283, ENST 28702

GISC 28800. History of Cartography. 100 Units.

This course offers a grand overview of the key developments in mapmaking throughout history worldwide, from pre-literate cartography to the modern interactive digital environment. It looks at the producers, their audience, the technologies and artistic systems used, and the human and global contexts in which they developed. The course also features experiential learning components with field trips to map collections at Regenstein Library and Newberry Library.

Instructor(s): Yue Lin Terms Offered: Spring 2023-24

Equivalent Course(s): GISC 38800, ARCH 28800, CHST 28800, HIST 25121, HIST 35121

GISC 29000. Reading/Research: Geographic Information Sciences. 100 Units.

Independent study for graduate students interested in Geographic Information Sciences (GIS). Students and instructors can arrange a Reading/Research course when the material being studied goes beyond the scope of a particular course, when students are working on material not covered in an existing course, or when students would like to receive academic credit for independent research. Subject, course of study, and requirements must be arranged with the instructor.

Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter 2021-22

Prerequisite(s): Instructor consent required.

Equivalent Course(s): GISC 49000

